

# Facilitating Critical Conversations

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A Teaching Resource for Challenging Oppression  
in Toronto District School Board Classrooms

## PART 1 - FRAMEWORKS



## **Facilitating Critical Conversations: A Teaching Resource for Challenging Oppression in Toronto District School Board Classrooms. Part 1 - Frameworks**

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ISBN: 978-0-88881-354-1

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# Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| About the Writers   | 4  |
| From the Equity, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Department   | 5  |
| TDSB Equity Policies and Guidelines                         | 6  |
| Core Beliefs  | 7  |
| Introduction  | 8  |
| Creating Conditions for Success: Roles and Responsibilities | 9  |
| Framework for Facilitating Critical Conversations           | 15 |
| Glossary  | 23 |
| References  | 29 |

This is  
**PART 1 - FRAMEWORKS**  
of 2 parts.



## About the Writers

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Kulsoom Anwer is a secondary school teacher and Assistant Curriculum Leader of English with the Toronto District School Board. She is a co-author of *Beyond Five Paragraphs: Advanced Essay Writing Skills* and of *Constructing Meaning: Skills for Understanding Contemporary Texts* (Nelson). Kulsoom is a Curriculum Developer at Northside Hip Hop Archive and author of “The Hip Hop Archive and the High School Student: Symbiotic Knowledge Disruption” in *Hip-Hop Archives: The Politics and Poetics of Knowledge Production* (Intellect Books). She holds a Master of Education from York University with a focus on policy and curriculum that responds to linguistic diversity in the classroom. She teaches from a stance that prioritises racial and economic justice.

### Salima Kassam

Salima Kassam is a Principal with the Toronto District School Board. She has held roles as seconded faculty at York University’s Faculty of Education and as the Centrally Assigned Principal for Equity, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression and Teachers Learning and Leading. She is first and foremost a learner, listener and dreamer and believes in a world rooted in justice and liberation.

### Ramon San Vicente

Ramon San Vicente is a principal with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), educational activist, and author of various texts including *Rhymes to Re-Education: A Hip Hop Curriculum*, *10 Class Commandments: Tips for destreaming education* (song on YouTube), and *Schooling for Equity During & Beyond Covid-19*. Previously an Instructional Leader with Equitable and Inclusive Schools (TDSB), course director (York University’s Faculty of Education), K-12 Learning Coach (TDSB) and classroom teacher, his work focuses on challenging systems of oppression in education and exploring new possibilities for equitable schooling. Since his MEd thesis *Old School, New Rules: Black Males, Hip Hop Culture and Public Schooling*, Ramon’s writing and practice have been grounded in critical pedagogies including Critical Race Theory. He is passionate about continuing to learn/unlearn, creating spaces for youth culture in public education and collaborating with others who disrupt oppressive practices in schools.

### Jay Williams

Jay Williams is an educator, speaker, and education consultant based in Toronto, ON, Canada. He has spoken on topics of race, Black masculinity, education, Hip Hop as Critical Relevant Responsive pedagogy, Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), and his journey navigating through it all. In addition, in his current role Coordinator of Equity, at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), he holds portfolios in both equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, the Black Student Success and Excellence (BSSE) initiative, and Model Schools for Inner Cities (MISC). His social media content speaks to his perspective of issues including race, culture, education, and social justice, with a focus on how Black males navigate and experience topics of masculinity, vulnerability and manhood. Jay believes in the importance of being a role model to engage, empower, motivate, and inspire not only youth and educators but society as a whole.

## From the Equity, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Department

In the dynamic landscape of education, fostering an equitable and inclusive learning environment requires educators to engage in critical conversations with their students that transcend the conventional boundaries of the classroom. The imperative to address issues of equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression has become increasingly evident as society grapples with systemic disparities and prejudices. Recognizing the transformative power of dialogue, this document serves as a guide for educators committed to delving into critical conversations. By framing discussions within equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression education, leaders and educators develop tools and strategies to navigate the complexities of their own positionality, views, and opinions while authentically acknowledging and understanding the diverse lived experiences of their students.

In the pursuit of meaningful educational experiences, it is incumbent upon educators to critically reflect on their roles and responsibilities, fostering an environment where students feel seen, heard, and valued.

This document offers a comprehensive framework designed to empower educators in navigating the nuances of critical conversations. The structured approach of this document will help to facilitate discussions that challenge biases and promote a more just learning community. As educators embark on this transformative journey, they are encouraged to embrace introspection and actively engage with the document. By doing so, educators are fostering a learning environment that not only acknowledges but actively dismantles systemic barriers, ultimately paving the way for a more equitable and empowering educational experience for all. This 2024 Facilitating Critical Conversations: A Teaching Resource for Challenging Oppression in Toronto District School Board Classrooms has been revised to support classrooms and schools as we build a better future.



## TDSB Equity Policies and Guidelines

The TDSB strives for fairness, equity and inclusion as essential principles in schools and these principles are integrated into all programs, operations and policies (TDSB, 2014). The TDSB is committed to an inclusive curriculum, supporting student engagement and delivering effective teacher professional learning to help all students succeed.

This resource has been created to assist classroom-based educators in fulfilling the equity requirements in the following policies.

- [Equity Policy \(P037\)](#) (2018) (Toronto District School Board, 2018)
- [Human Rights Policy \(P031\)](#) (Toronto District School Board, 2023)
- [Selection and Approval of Learning Resources Procedure \(PR531\)](#) (Toronto District School Board, 2010)
- [Handling Concerns about Learning Resources and Controversial Issues \(PR532\)](#) (Toronto District School Board, 2009)
- [Expected Practices for Understanding and Dealing with Discrimination](#) (Toronto District School Board, 2023)

## Core Beliefs

Critical conversations with and amongst staff teams, division groups as well as school communities can and should occur in order to enrich and deepen the commitment of anti-oppressive work that is happening in classroom spaces.

This teaching resource, grounded in anti-Oppressive approach, is built on the following beliefs (each point is worth exploring, unpacking and actioning with larger school communities):

- All students are capable of brilliance, and educators should be anchored in an asset-based approach.
- Students' lives must be at the centre of their educational experiences in schools.
- Schooling in North America is inherently designed for the benefit of the dominant culture (i.e., white, middle-upper class, male, Christian, **cisgender**, heterosexual, able-bodied, neurotypical, etc.). The interests and needs of the dominant culture determine established behaviours, values, and traditions that are considered acceptable and the “norm” in education, other institutions, and the broader society.
- Education is a colonial structure that centres whiteness and Eurocentricity and therefore it must be actively decolonized.
- Race matters - it is a visible and dominant identity factor in determining peoples’ social, political, economic, and cultural experiences.
- **White Supremacy** is a structural reality that impacts all students and must be discussed and dismantled in classrooms, schools, and communities.

## Introduction

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has a stated commitment to the elimination of institutional **Discrimination**, promotion of Fairness, Equity, Acceptance and **Inclusion**, as well as to ensuring that our school system is built on the principles of **Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism, Decolonization**, non-discrimination, and equitable and inclusive education (Toronto District School Board, 2018). This commitment is situated within the legal framework of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the [Ontario Human Rights Code, Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#), [Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](#) (2009), and [Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation](#) (2014). The TDSB also believes that “the classroom is the natural place for critical examination of topics, perspectives and issues” (Toronto District School Board, 2010).

*Facilitating Critical Conversations* is a teaching resource, developed to support classroom-based educators (teachers and support staff) to fulfil this commitment of anti-oppressive practices by facilitating critical conversations in their classrooms. For the purpose of this resource, a critical conversation is “any discussion about the ways that injustice affects our lives and our society. It’s a conversation that explores the relationships between identity and power, that traces the structures that privilege some at the expense of others, that helps students think through the actions they can take to create a more just, more equitable world.” (Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2019)

While anti-Oppression is urgently required as part of our commitment to creating inclusive and oppression free environments, this teaching resource acknowledges that anti-Oppressive Pedagogy is also a journey. It requires us to engage in deep self-reflection, to know our students, and to know and work in respectful and reciprocal relationships with student’s families and communities. It requires us to consider that one person’s experience of acknowledgement may be another person’s experience of tragedy. The lesson ideas provided are a sample and beginning of a much broader approach to teaching and learning; one that requires us to respond to the influences of power and identity in all aspects of education. This resource will support us in taking an essential step on this journey by providing a framework and suggestions for facilitating critical conversations with students.

This teaching resource is a revision of the document *A Teaching Resource for Dealing with Controversial and Sensitive Issues in Toronto District School Board Classrooms* (2003).





# **Creating Conditions for Success: Roles and Responsibilities**



# Creating Conditions for Success: Roles and Responsibilities

Central to the work of addressing, promoting and actioning equity is the necessity for all levels and spaces of the educational institute to do their part and to share the values and beliefs of anti-oppression and equitable practices. Each institution stakeholder has roles and responsibilities in order to participate in creating optimum conditions for success and to provide the space and culture for equitable outcomes. The roles are: the system, the superintendent, the administrator, the educator, the student, and the community.

## The system responsibilities:

1

provides the framework for challenging discrimination and oppression. The TDSB and its educators are responsible for continuous professional dialogue and training to develop and refine the concepts, skills, and judgement needed to apply the guidelines in all aspects of the curriculum, including:

- selecting appropriate learning materials to achieve desired expectations;
- providing educator reference material and databases;
- identifying examples of the successful application of the approach outlined in this document;
- assisting in the development of self-confidence by educators and administrators in respect to their own judgement and efficacy;
- providing a protocol or process for critical conversations;
- ensuring representation and participation of constituent groups in the process of defining, reviewing, and revising policies and programs related to anti-oppressive education.

## 2 Superintendent responsibilities:

- Be aware of policies, procedures, and guidelines for:
  - Dealing with controversial and sensitive materials ([\*Handling Concerns about Learning Resources and Controversial Issues, PR.532\*](#))
  - Selection and approval of learning resources ([\*Selection and Approval of Learning Resources, PR531\*](#))
- Ensure that administrators are aware of relevant policies and procedures
- Promote opportunities for professional dialogue in school and learning networks about how to use and discuss texts dealing with critical conversations, especially how they connect to teaching and learning
- Create opportunities for leaders in families of schools to have critical conversations about equity-related issues, share solutions and provide mechanisms for support and learning

## 3 Administrator Responsibilities:

- Provide support and provide ongoing feedback to educators in implementing the strategies for challenging oppression in the classroom (see the “Suggested Lesson Ideas” section)
- Facilitate a culture of critical dialogue within the school community that supports educators with ongoing selection of meaningful and appropriate learning resources and supports them to build critical consciousness and pedagogical intentionality
- Be aware of policies and procedures for dealing with controversy and sensitive materials, as well as the criteria for the selection and approval of learning resources
- Work in partnership with teacher leaders, the teacher-librarian, and central staff to ensure the classrooms, resource centres, school library, media collections, and digital resources contain text that reflect diverse communities and perspectives.
- Ensure educators have reviewed resources which they are promoting and using, and that they examine the use of resources dealing with critical conversations through discussions with team/teaching colleagues

- Explore strategies which will ensure that there is informative communication and engagement with parents, guardians, and caregivers about students' school programs using an anti-oppressive framework that accounts for power and identity

## Educator Responsibilities:

## 4

- Teach students to engage with learning resources and the world in a way that notices, names and responds to manifestations of oppression such as colonialism, white supremacy, racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, and heteronormativity to name a few
- Know who our students are, their identities, abilities, and lived experiences. This allows us as educators to create the conditions necessary for dynamic, deep learning and create environments that reflect and honour the assets and gifts they bring to the classroom
- Present issues with consideration of the developmental maturity of the particular students being taught
- Develop skills and confidence for processing experiences as they arise spontaneously in the school, classroom, and the context of daily living. This includes practising the ability to stay in discomfort and have brave conversations with your colleagues, your students, and the larger school community
- Aim not to be experts but to continually build our capacities to centre multiple and conflicting truths, prioritise voices and perspectives most marginalised and silenced, ask critical questions, identify how power is operating to enact harm and violence, and reflect on our own assumptions

## 5 Student Responsibilities:

- Learn the skills to analyse learning resources, process knowledge, and act upon what they have learned
- Take responsibility for being active participants in their learning. This includes active listening, active reflecting, active speaking, and active reading
- Transfer and implement the skills learned in school to other aspects of their lives and to participate as social agents of change within their local communities and beyond
- Recognize their roles in a pluralistic environment, to engage in constructive dialogue, and to support one another in order to become respectful, critical collaborators

## 6 Community Responsibilities:

- Support the board's endeavour to create a learning environment that is safe and respectful of the human rights of all members of the community
- Recognize and responding to the shared roles of the school and community in addressing social issues
- Support the school as it deals with critical conversations across the curriculum
- Support students' developing understanding of how to deal with such issues in texts and in life
- Engage in critical and constructive conversations with educational stakeholders on issues impacting local and global communities



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# **Framework for Facilitating Critical Conversations**



# Framework for Facilitating Critical Conversations

The framework below was developed to support educators in facilitating critical conversations with their students - conversations about identity, power, and oppression - as part of an anti-oppressive pedagogy. As we commit to creating a more just world, we commit to equipping ourselves to facilitate critical conversations and to move from conversation into action for change. The framework is intended to ensure that the objectives of anti-oppressive education through the facilitating of critical conversations are met.

## Before the Conversation: Educator Critical Consciousness

It is important for educators to deepen their own critical consciousness prior to building on and responding to the critical consciousness of the students in their classes. Please consider the following questions:

- How do I enter this learning with humility and vulnerability, knowing that as educators, it is not possible to have all the answers and we must model this reality for students?
- What professional learning have I engaged in to further my understanding of various forms of oppression (e.g. white supremacy, anti-Black racism, settler colonialism, transphobia, etc.?)
- In what ways have I deepened my knowledge of the historical and present-day context of issues of oppression?
- How do I interact with people that have different lived experiences than me? What privileges do I have that others do not? How do I navigate these privileges?



- What personal biases shape my reaction and thinking to the content of a particular subject/lesson? What experiences have shaped my biases?
- How do I handle controversial points of view or expressions of prejudice or hate during class discussions?
- How have I engaged in critical self-reflection of my own ideologies, beliefs, and comfort in addressing issues of oppression in the classroom?
- How might I appropriately share aspects of my own identity and experiences?
- Have I paid attention to who my students/families are with respect to identities and systems of oppression being explored? Is the learning climate in my classroom respectful and safe enough for students who belong to marginalised groups to share their experiences and feelings?
- Am I aware of and able to use board resources, as needed, to help me with anti-oppression principles and educational approaches?

## Preparing for Critical Conversation

Knowing how students self-identify (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, and ability) and understanding their lived experiences supports educators in positioning conversations of social inequities. Please consider the following questions:

- How have I used an anti-oppressive framework in the selection of learning resources to explore a topic?
- In what ways have I utilised students' lived experiences and considered the knowledge base of the students to inform exploration of the topic?
- Do my students have experiences with the issues that are central to the topic/text? What experiences?
- What additional or background information do my students need to deal with this topic/text?
- How do I provide learning opportunities for students about their own identity and other identities that recognize how power influences understandings of identity?
- How do I ensure that all students in my class feel included in the content and in the discussion?

- How do I provide opportunities for student leadership, such as leading small group and whole class discussions, presenting ideas formally and informally etc., and encouraging student action within the classroom, school, and community?
- How will I explain to students that sharing their experiences creates the conditions necessary within the classroom for more students to share?
- How do I ensure that my students have the confidence to regularly take risks by expressing opinions, asking questions, or disagreeing with me and with each other?
- In what ways have I made meaningful and real connections and taken leadership to support oppressed communities, parents, and students?
- How have/will I participate in action for justice?
- How do I encourage student contributions to the development, delivery, and assessment of the curriculum?

## Engaging in Critical Conversation

It is essential for educators and students to examine the historical and present-day manifestations of oppressive beliefs, practices, and structures. Educators should be responsive to students' questions and needs.

- How am I connecting this issue to historical and present-day contexts in ways that directly name systems of oppression (e.g., white supremacy, settler colonialism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, xenophobia, etc.)?
- In what ways do I highlight the oppressive beliefs, practices, and structures that frame the issue and/or content?
- Why have I chosen this particular learning resource? How does it centre the voices of non-dominant identity groups? How does it further student learning on the theme or topic?
- **Do my instructional strategies take into consideration learning styles and cultural backgrounds of students?**
- **Do the visual materials in the classroom represent a variety of perspectives from different groups?**
- How do my interactions with the students in my class support their success in critical thinking and questioning?

- Does language in the learning resource reflect the prejudices and biases of a group or culture through labels, metaphors, and similes? How do the historical perspectives and/or the author's influence impose limitations on the point of view?
- If needed, how might I supplement the learning resource in order to provide multiple perspectives, or to validate the social identities and experiences of my students?
- How will I prioritise students who are from non-dominant identity groups and/or are most underserved?
- How am I establishing school and classroom conditions to facilitate conversations based on multiple perspectives and on challenging conversations around systemic inequities and injustices?
- What resources am I selecting to support the teaching and learning of oppression in the classroom? How do these resources help push the conversation into action?
- How am I navigating the discussion when conversation gets heated? Do I provide a 'cooling-off period when necessary or consider the space to reflect before returning to the discussion? Do I make room for personal and cultural beliefs, where conflicting values may occur, and at the same time, acknowledge and remind students of shared, safe classroom space, within the context of human rights values, respect and at times, tolerance?
- Am I thinking about the various identities students' may hold, whether they are part of a group, their comfort in identifying as part of this group, and articulating/coming out as part of this group? Have I considered the safety of students in disclosing their positionalities or identities during a given discussion or issue?



## Engaging in Critical Conversation Expanded: Teaching the Text

In facilitating critical conversations in the classroom, the educator considers the students' experience before, during, and after the presentation of the selected learning resources.

### Before the Critical Conversation

The educator uses specific strategies and approaches with students before they read/experience the text.

#### Questions

- Have I considered my own biases related to the topic/text?
- Have I anticipated student responses to the topic/text?
- Have I discussed with students the way in which texts are always constructed from a particular perspective or from particular biases?
- Have I helped students to place the text in a broader historical/social context to separate ideas from people and to understand how context changes what we know?
- Have I provided materials with positive themes and role models to balance negative ones (e.g., exploring struggle and oppression while also exploring joy and resistance)?
- Have I stated expectations for student learning and assessment? Do I tell students explicitly that I separate their perspectives from my assessment of their skills and knowledge?
- As a general practice, have I ensured that parents, guardians and caregivers are aware of the units of study we are exploring and the central learning resources to be explored?

### During the Critical Conversation

The educator helps the students to focus on the presentation of the text and handles concerns as they arise. The educator models anti-oppressive attitudes and critical literacy skills in conducting classroom activities and in discussing learning resources.

#### Questions

- Do I ask questions that encourage students to think critically by examining more than one perspective?

- Do I select and utilise appropriate strategies for analysing learning resources throughout the text experience?
- Do I address student responses, tensions, and biases constructively as they arise?
- How do I encourage and teach students to challenge each other and myself on biases and stereotypical views they may express, so that they may learn appropriate and effective ways of addressing controversial issues when identifying racist beliefs, languages, and practices?
- Have I taught my students how to gain more understanding of the perspectives and stance of the authors of the text or resource?

## After the Critical Conversation

The educator processes the issues in the text with students, making sure that they have recognized and dealt with biases as well as considered various strategies for responding to examples of oppression explored in the text.

### Questions

- Can students formulate questions about the text that illustrate their ability to apply higher-order thinking skills (analyse, synthesise, and evaluate)?
- Do my activities/assignments enable students to deal critically with the bias contained in the text?
- Have I encouraged students to research gaps in the material(s)/ presentation?
- Can students respond to text, both on a personal and a theoretical level?
- Can students explain power relationships in the text?
- Can students articulate various actions that can be taken to respond to systems of oppression explored in the text?



## Extending the Critical Conversation

Educators are encouraged to provide opportunities for self- and whole group reflection and **action** around the learning:

- What opportunities and spaces are provided for students and educators to consolidate the learning experiences, both individually and as a class in order to support further learning?
- How are educators using student voice and student leadership, particularly from non-dominant identity groups and particularly voices that challenge dominant perspectives, to inform next steps in the learning process? Based on student-voice, what continued professional learning do I need to extend this learning?
- How am I serving the most marginalised students and members to enhance learning for students?
- How am I taking leadership from community educators, organisations parents to move important conversations into anti-oppressive action?

**This is the end of  
PART 1 - FRAMEWORKS  
of 2 parts.**

# Glossary

# Glossary

*The following terms are taken from Policy P037 - Equity unless otherwise indicated. Please visit [Policy P037 - Equity](#) (Toronto District School Board, 2018) for a more comprehensive list of definitions.*

**Anti-Asian Racism:** ongoing and historical discrimination, stereotyping and systemic injustices experienced by people of Asian descent. They can be based on biases and assumptions of their ethnicities, nationalities, languages, etc. People of Asian descent experience specific forms of racist tropes that may or may not be experienced by other racialized people. Such perceptions, rooted in Canada's racist history and laws, include perceptions of being a "Yellow Peril," a "Perpetual Foreigner," a "Model Minority," "exotic," or "mystic." (Government of Canada, 2023)

**Anti-Black Racism:** one of the many results of White Supremacy and is distinct from other forms of racism. Anti-Black racism and its complexities and nuances are specific to the histories and bodies of African/African descendant/Black peoples. Anti-Black racism promotes and upholds unearned privileges based on whiteness and proximity to whiteness and Eurocentric ideals, in terms of phenotype, Culture, and performativity. It also reinforces internalised hate and oppression faced by people of African descent as a result of the idealising and privileging of whiteness. This includes shadeism, colourism and other damaging manifestations of White Supremacy such as the use and (re) perpetuation of the dominant and "universal" Eurocentric lens and views. Anti-Black racism is deeply invested in the continuation of power structures within the dominant society that disadvantage, deny and exclude people of African descent, and actively works against measures implemented to improve equity and ultimately liberation for African/African descendant/Black peoples.




**Anti-Indigenous Racism:** a distinct form of racism that targets Indigenous Peoples based on race, heritage, traditions, languages and ancestry and rooted in colonial notions of white, settler dominance and superiority - resulting in systemic oppression, denial of rights, cultural erasure, erosion of dignity and individual actions of discrimination, hatred and violence. In Canada the process of colonization has resulted in ongoing and entrenched systemic racism and systematic destruction of traditions, values, language, and basic human rights against Indigenous Peoples that has been described by some as 'cultural genocide'. Racist and colonial ideologies continue to significantly affect the health, well-being, success, fair and just treatment and opportunities for of Indigenous Peoples, cutting across the social determinants of health; impacting access to education, housing, food security and employment, and permeating societal systems and institutions including the health care, child welfare and criminal justice systems.

**Anti-oppressive Practice (AOP):** an interdisciplinary approach that requires the practitioner to critically examine the power imbalance inherent in an organisational structure with regards to the larger sociocultural context to develop strategies for creating an egalitarian environment free from oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination in the larger society by engaging at both the local and systemic level. In general community practice, it is about responding to oppression by dominant groups and individuals. In social services, it challenges oppressive practices and structures and helps remove barriers and bias, ensuring access and service delivery provided in a fully inclusive manner. Bias: conscious or unconscious preference for or against an individual or a group, based on their identity.

**Anti-racism:** the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism (Government of Canada, 2016). Anti-racism examines the power imbalances between racialized people and non-racialized/white people. These imbalances play out in the form of unearned privileges that white people benefit from and racialized people do not (McIntosh, 1988).

**Anti Semitism:** latent or overt hostility, or hatred directed towards, or discrimination against, individual Jewish people or the Jewish people for reasons connected to their religion, ethnicity, and their cultural, historical, intellectual, and religious heritage (Toronto District School Board, 2023).



**Cisheteronormativity:** the set of ideas, social norms, beliefs, and culture that govern people whose gender identity corresponds to the one assigned at birth, and people who also identify as heterosexual. This type of social construction is considered the only model for sexual-romantic and parental relationships, and it establishes advantages for people who abide by this system (MODII, 2023).

**Cisgender:** having a gender-identity that is congruent with one's biological sex assigned at birth (e.g. one's biological sex is female and one's gender-identity is as a woman).

**Colonialism:** a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism - such as in the case of Canada - is the unique process where the colonising population does not leave the territory, asserts ongoing sovereignty to the land, actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their cultures, traditions and ties to the land.

**Decolonization:** about "cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for Indigenous Peoples with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty -- the right and ability of Indigenous Peoples to practise self-determination over their land, cultures, and political and economic systems (Community-Based Global Learning Collaborative, 2023).

**Discrimination:** unjust treatment of a person or group based on their identity. This can be the differential allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society. There is a difference between discrimination, often executed by individuals and systemic discrimination, which exists on a larger, institutional level.

**Dominant Group Identity:** an identity group whose members share a common privilege. An individual may simultaneously belong to dominant identity groups (e.g., straight, white) and non-dominant identity groups (e.g., undocumented, experiencing poverty). (Learning for Justice, 2019)

**Gender Identity:** how a person identifies themselves based on an individual's intrinsic sense of self and their sense of being female, male, a combination of both, or neither regardless of their biological sex.

**Gender Expression:** refers to the way an individual expresses their gender identity (e.g. in the way they dress, the length and style of their hair, the way they act or speak, the volume of their voice, and in their choice of whether or not to wear make-up.) Understandings of gender expression are culturally specific and will change over time.

**Identity:** the set of visible and invisible characteristics we use to categorise and define ourselves and those around us (e.g., gender, race, age, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, marital/family status, ability, sexual orientation, etc.). Identity shapes our experience by influencing the ways we see ourselves and the way others see us. (Learning for Justice, 2019)


**Identity Group:** a group of people who share one or more identity characteristics [e.g., women, Latinx people, teenagers, etc.]. Members of an identity group can share a wide range of experiences, positive and negative. (Learning for Justice, 2019)

**Inclusion:** a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners. It is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity and learner differences and promotes equitable opportunities for all learners (Government of Alberta, 2023).

**Intersectionality:** a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how each person belongs to multiple, overlapping identity groups and that identities and oppressions overlap resulting in multiple and intersecting oppressions or privileges. (Learning for Justice, 2019).

**Islamophobia:** includes racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2023).

**Oppression:** the prolonged, systemic, abuse of power or control by one group of people (the dominant group) at the expense of others (the oppressed) and maintains a cultural imbalance of power which socially supports mistreatment and exploitation of all groups of 'less powerful' individuals. This results in unjust advantages, status and benefits for one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs, economic and institutional structures and subtle and overt cultural practices. Because oppression is institutionalised in our society, target group members often face barriers and limitations in many aspects of social participation (i.e. school, health care, social services, employment, parenting, housing etc). Oppression actively provides unearned privileges and protections to some members of our community, allowing them to ignore the presence of discrimination and or barriers to fair and equal access and opportunity such as classism, racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia. (For more information on addressing oppression (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2021).



**Settler Colonialism:** the literal and figurative erasure of Indigenous Peoples in order to take the land for use by settlers in perpetuity. In the past, settler-colonialism involved committing genocide by murdering Indigenous Peoples, as well as stealing their land through broken treaties. Currently, settler-colonialism is seen in a number of ways. One way is in the omission of Indigenous presence, for example in their absence in school curriculum (Learning for Justice, 2019).

**Transphobia:** transphobia is a range of negative attitudes, feelings or actions toward transgender or transsexual people, or toward transsexuality. Transphobia can be emotional disgust, fear, violence, anger or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to society's gender expectations. It is often expressed alongside homophobic views and hence is often considered an aspect of Homophobia. Transphobia is a type of prejudice and discrimination similar to racism and sexism. Transgender people of colour are often subjected to all three forms of discrimination at once.

**White Supremacy:** the belief that white people are superior to those who are Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of the global majority because they are white.

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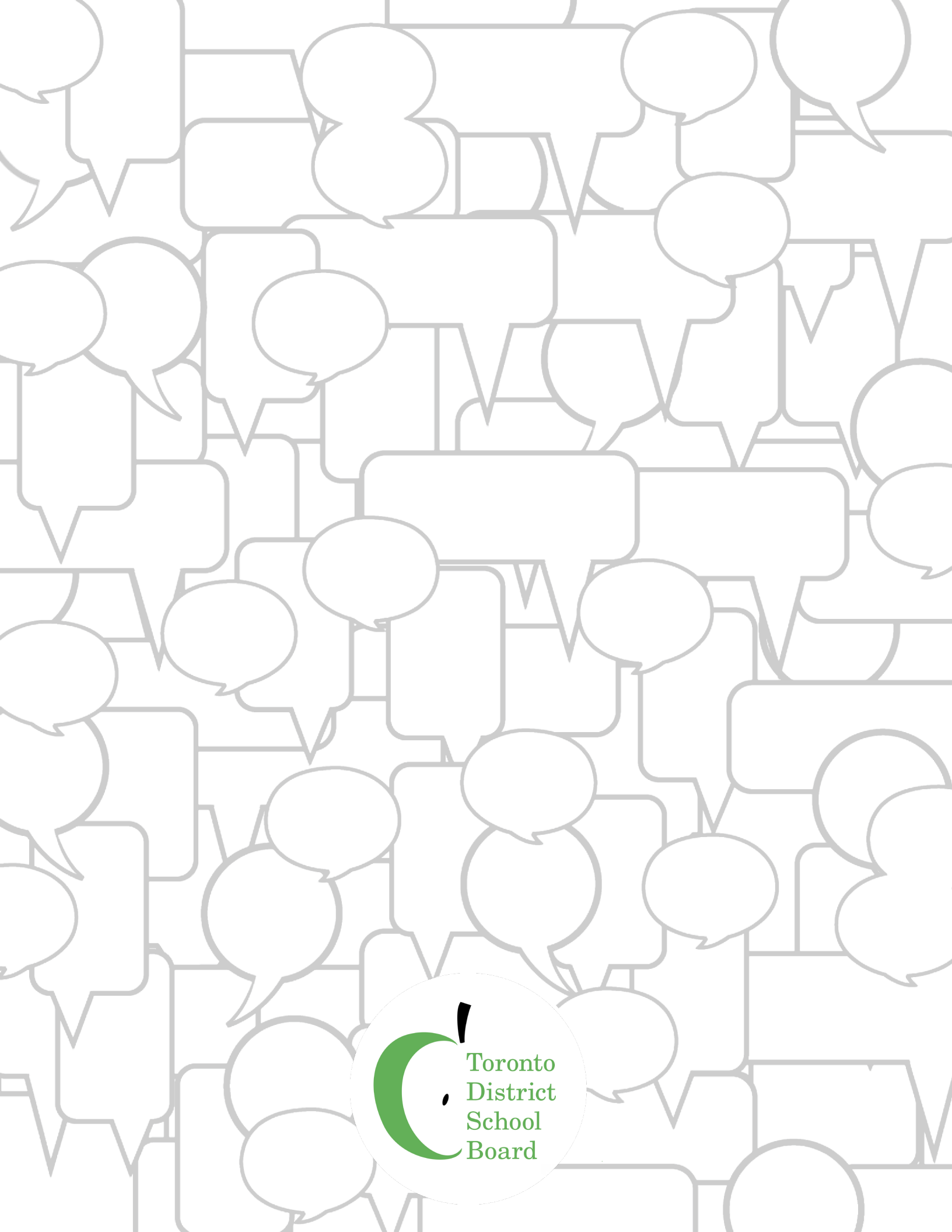
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